HAPPY NEW YEAR 1988!!!!!

STARRCADE '88 SPECIAL EDITION

DOUBLE ISSUE

14-PAGE SPECIAL

MATWATCH

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DEC. 26-JAN. 8
VOL. 1. NOS. 27-28

RIC FLAIR DEFEATS LEX LUGER IN NORFOLK TO RETAIN WORLD TITLE; SULLIVAN & WILLIAMS WIN U.S. TAG BELTS; STEINER TAKES TV BELT

DUSTY & STING STOPPED BY ELLERING FROM WORLD TAG TEAM VICTORY; MIDNIGHTS STOP O.M.E.; BARRY HOLDS ONTO U.S. TITLE

NORFOLK, Va. - In a dramatic finish, Lex Luger---already smarting from a knee injury---lost control of his "human torture rack" on Ric Flair and the NWA world champion fell on Luger (with his patented leg on ropes for leverage) to retain the NWA title in 30:48 Monday night in the main event of STARRCADE '88: TRUE GRITT at the Norfolk Scope Coliseum before a capacity house. After the match, Flair declared Luger will never get another title shot.

After a slow first nine minutes, in which Flair mostly sold Luger's power moves, Flair popped Luger in the eye at 8:50. Luger rallied to hammerlock Flair on the outside rail and get a 2½ count on a clothesline at 12:06. The match offered 14 near-falls in the final 20 minutes.

The match's turning point came after Luger had scored a flying press at 21:06 for an apparent pin but a J.J. Dillon distraction held the count to two. After Lex scored a suplex, military press and powerslam, Flair rolled out of the ring and while Dillon was arguing with referee Tommy Young, Flair clobbered Luger's knee with a steel chair (grounds for a DQ---which would have cost Flair the belt). Flair applied the figure four at 25:33 and with the crowd shifting to Luger's favor after an early split, Lex reversed the move for a break at 26:53.

Every time Luger attempted a rally, his knee would stop his offense (his salesmanship was better than usual at this point). Lex tried a sunset flip but only for a 2-count at 29:07. Luger offered a powerful clothesline at 30:04 for a 2 3/4 count and after a powerslam,went for the torture rack at 30:38. But as his leg buckled, Flair covered Luger and scored the fall at 30:48 with his leg leverage. At the end, Flair had to be rolled out of the ring by Dillon. MATCH RATING: POWERSLAM-PLUS. I wouldn't have given you a plug nickel for the first 9:00 and Ric didn't need that trademark leg-on-ropes but these two really gave it all in the last 20 and those near-falls were dramatic. I'd have still rather had FLAIR vs. STING.

In other matches:

U.S. TAG TEAM CHAMPIONSHIP: STEVE WILLIAMS & KEVIN SULLIVAN D. THE FANTASTICS. A good battle of speed vs. power, The Fantastics opened fast with a series of double team moves on Doc and Sullivan took a nasty over-the-top tumble at 5:00. Williams gained control by kneeing Tommy Rogers in the back at 6:26 and later used a Roman suplex. Steve & Kevin kept up their power moves until Rogers rallied to suplex Kevin at 14:30. Fulton tagged in and put a sleeper on Doc at 15:24 but after Sullivan saves, Fulton goes for a Thesz press and Doc reverses it into a Hot Shot for the pin and title change at 15:49. Rating: POWERSLAM....good opener & crowd heat.

MIDNIGHT EXPRESS VS. ORIGINAL MIDNIGHT EXPRESS: Cornette's team virtually dominated the first 8:00 with several high spots but Condrey & Rose slowed the pace and lowered the crowd heat with a series of brawl and rest moves. (Jim & Paul E. Dangerously had a wild exchange before the match). At 15:10, Randy Rose missed a rocket launcher and Stan Lane tagged in to shift into overdrive, superkicking Rose at 16:50 but Dangerously came in to use the phone on Lane at 17:10. But as Teddy Long counted two, he found the phone by Lane. As he chased Rose, a recovering Eaton enters to set up the double-goozle and Stan pins Rose. Post-match: Condrey gets Cornette's tennis racket and proceeds to destroy Jim as Paul E. uses the phone on Jim & Stan. Finally, as Paul spits on Jim, Bobby retrieves the racket and clears the ring. POWERSLAM...but only after I watched the replay. They had a better match in Columbus, Ga. The post-match also needed to be longer but the O.M.E. didn't lose their heat.

RUSSIAN ASSASSINS D. IVAN KOLOFF & JUNKYARD DOG: Not much here. With all four in at 7:35, Uncle Ivan sickles Victory but as Teddy Long runs out JYD, Paul Jones tosses object for Angel to put in mask and Uncle Ivan is pinned at 7:47. BOMB-PLUS....this match had no heat, interest, or reason to be on this card and it was obvious.

NWA TV TITLE: RICK STEINER D. MIKE ROTUNDO. Kevin Sullivan in a cage, Steiner good early amateur moves & hot clothesline at 3:49. Early crowd heat wanes at 4:00. Drop toe hold at 4:22 by Mike reversed into hammerlock by Rick, who bites Mike's fanny. Good belly-to-belly suplex by Mike at 6:18. Mike tosses Rick out on his head, rails him and continues power moves before vicious clothesline on Steiner at 14:40. Steiner rallies for small package at 15:05, then clotheslines Rotundo at 15:25. Doc shows up at 16:00. Rick gets near-fall power-slam at 16:20. Williams rings bell and Rick thinks he's won. Kevin's cage is lowered but Tommy Young explains it all to Teddy Long (they looked like black-and-white Twin Hebners). Kevin chokes Young but Steiner reverses whip and crashes Mike into Sullivan and scores the dramatic pin at 17:55. DRAW-PLUS....I've seen that finish before but it popped the crowd and Steiner's victory lap laughing at Kevin & Mike was priceless.

U.S. TITLE: BARRY WINDHAM COUNTOUT OVER BAM BAM BIGELOW: A good power match, surprisingly so. Barry slugs Bam Bam three times at 1:55 but Bigelow gives Barry an abdomen-smasher at 2:15. At 6:10, Bammer uses high military press and follows with standing dropkick which Barry sells brilliantly into the rail. Barry rallies to toss Bam Bam out on his knees at 9:50 with great camera closeups. Bam Bam returns for a superdive but misses his nuclear splash at 10:45. Barry connects with lariat, suplex and power moves before applying the claw at 13:50. Barry slams Bigelow at 15:10 but misses elbow from top rope and Bamer rallies. But Bigelow misses clothesline and both go over top rope at 15:45. Bigelow is posted and can't return before countout at 16:08. POWERSLAM-PLUS...hotter match than I anticipated & well-done from a power standpoint.

NWA WORLD TAG TEAM CHAMPIONSHIP: DUSTY RHODES & STING WIN DQ OVER ROAD WARRIORS (WARRIORS RETAIN BELTS): Roadies attack before bell but Dusty/Sting run them out. After an attempt by Dusty at Animal's eye, Hawk tags in and opens up heavy artillery on Sting. But Sting rallies for powerslam at 3:25. Sting gets dramatic flying press onto Animal on floor at 5:05 with greatest camera angle I've ever seen on that move. After some heavy exchanges, Hawk & Dusty are in, and Hawk gets sleeper but Sting tags and single-arm DDTs Animal at 10:00, following with dropkick & Stinger Splash. Sting applies Scorpion but is tossed out onto the floor. As Dusty is doubleteamed, he crotches Animal and Sting rallies for a flying press. As Young is ready to count 3, Paul Ellering enters and hooks Young's arm. Tommy signals for a DQ. Dusty & Sting clear the ring but don't win belts. POWERSLAM....all 4 really gave a lot but I hated the ending and I still say Sting was wasted. The guy needs a title win.

STARRCADE SIDELIGHTS: Some bad transmission problems in the first two hours, which saw four picture losses and the loss of the commentators' audio for four minutes during Rotundo-Steiner.....In the first five minutes, we could actually hear the camera switches on the air and a bad hand-held camera shot on Ross & Caudle before the opener....The camera work, however, I felt was the best I've seen on an NWA PPV plus the lighting was much better than for CLASH IV....Ross & Caudle were outstanding, despite the technical flaws. Ross had truly done his homework by giving much background info on the wrestlers (hometowns, old coaches, ages, i.e.) and Caudle's setups of the key battles and his aggressive disagreement with the predictions (at least some of them) of Tony Schiavone & Magnum T.A. were first-rate.

Tony & Magnum did a fine job as overall hosts and we did have three key dressing room interviews, even though Magnum's mike was dead early with the Varsity Club. What did we need? More pre-match interviews....and why, oh why can't we get a Cornette or Dangerously interview unless Jim Crockett is trying to kill them; BEST LINES: (ROSS) - "There's the Bob Newhart of wrestling photographers, Bill Apter"; "If wrestling is an art form, then that man is using oils and everyone else watercolors," on Flair's effort.....Lou Thesz shown in the crowd....We'll detail more in 2 weeks but....Total Production, 2.4 (countoffs for major picture/audio trouble); Crowd Enthusiasm, 3.8; Quality of Matches, 3.5; Announcing, 4.5; Overall Excellence, 3.0 (again, markoffs for the technical distractions). TOTAL RATING: 17.2 on a scale of 25. A post-mortem in our next issue. One glaring note: while the Feb. 20 PPV was plugged 5 times, not one specific was given, which has to hurt promotion.

In overall wrestling, however, this was one of the most entertaining shows of the year. I felt there was only one poor match on the whole show.

TV TEMPO (Week of Dec. 19-25)

RATING SCALE: PINFALL - Must See. PILEDRIVER - Excellent. POWERSLAM - Good. DRAW - Average. RESTHOLD - Fair. BOMB - Poor. PLUS - Midscale rating.

NOTE: We'll resume ATLANTIC COAST results when new episodes are taped in January.

(SCW) - Joel Deaton/Jim Boss d. Black Reverend/Eddie Sweat; Steve Prichard draw with Superstar Siegler; TORNADO LUMBERJACK STRAP MATCH: Mr. Wrestling II/Ted Oates d. Steve Lawler/Dino Minnelli when Lawler errantly clotheslines Dino; Jimmy Powell/The Nightmare (Ted Allen) d. Lee Scott/Steve Bennett; Tom Thumb d. Dr. Evil to gain a 2-minute match with Sir Samuel Kent. Kent tries to escape but John Michaels tosses him in the ring but Kent eventually jabs the midget in the knees and as show ends, is raising Thumb for a slam. REPLAY: Comrade Busich heart punches Ranger Ross. POWERSLAM.

(CWA/SYND.) - Bill Dundee/Wendell Cooley (who reveals he isn't Rick Casey) d. Rough & Ready; Stud Stable d. Alan Reynolds/Ken Raper; CWA TITLE MATCH: Sid Vicious d. Brian Lee to win belt; Jeff Jarrett/Scott Steiner d. Medics; Beauty & the Beast d. Reynolds/Frazier; RPMs draw with Todd Morton/Dundee. POWERSLAM.

(WWC) - Batten Twins d. Bobby Jaggers/Dan Kroffat; Victor Jovica d. Don Kent; Rufus R. Jones d. Hercules Ayala. RESTHOLD.

(WWF) - [SPOTLIGHT]: Bubba Bossman d. Pete Kitchum; Ted DiBiase d. Tim Horner; Dino Bravo wins handicap match; Other winners: Demolitin, Brutus Beefcake, Honky Tonk Man/Greg Valentine; Anabolic Warrior; Santa Gene gets sardines from Bushwackers. RESTHOLD.
[CHALLENGE]: Tully & Arn d. Jim Brunzell/Lanny Poffo; Bad News Brown d. Vito Gomez; Haku d. Scott Casey; From SNME: Jim Duggan d. Boreus Zhukov; Hogan-Bro. Love angle; Other winner: Brutus Beefcake. DRAW.
[SUPERSTARS]: Akeem d. Juan Valdez; Ronnie Garvin d. Barry Horowitz; Powers of Pain d. Lanny Poffo/Joe Cruze; Other winners: Rick Rude, Duggan, Ron Bass. BRO. LOVE: Big John Studd returns and declares Bobby Heenan a weasel. ANGLE: Bad News Brown taunts Randy Savage and leads to brief brawl and pullapart. RESTHOLD...for angle.

(LTR) - Rerun of Ricky Morton guest episode. No rating because of repeat.

(AWA) - No first run shows until mid-January when future of ESPN contract will be determined.

(W. CLASS) - Steve Cox d. Botswana Beast; Cactus Jack Foley/Gary Young d. Mickey Finn/Solomon Grundy; Tony Falk d. The Hangman; Jeff Jarrett/Eric Embry/Brickhouse Brown vs. Iceman Parsons/Kimala/J.J. Funk still going as show ended. REPLAY: Embry-Akbar angles. DRAW.

(CWF) - CWF TAG TITLE: Bullet Bob & Bullet Brad d. Tony Anthony/Jerry Stubbs for belts; Dutch Mantel d. Lee Peek; Tom Prichard d. Eliminator; Willie B. Hert d. The Count; N.Y. Heartbreakers d. Steve Ray/Mike Colt; Black Bart d. Dell Johnson; Doug Furnas wins DQ over Kokina when Detroit Demolition runs in. ANGLES: Armstrongs sign rematch (for Dec. 29) with Anthony/Stubbs in which losers must split as team; Tom Prichard spins Wheel of Fortune, which stops on Brad Armstrong as his next CWF title opponent (see COMINGS & GOINGS). DRAW-PLUS.

(PWTW) - Yearender III: replay of show where Paul E. Dangerously assumes temporary co-host role of PWTW and later introduces Patrick Schaefer as permanent (well, not so permanent) co-host. No rating offered.

(NWA/TBS) - [WCW]: Barry Windham d. Eddie Gilbert when J.J. Dillon knees Eddie in back but after match, Eddie confronts Barry and is jumped by Ric Flair & Barry but Bam Bam Bigelow arrives to start 4-man brawl as show ends; Dustin Rhodes d. Trent Knight; Misty Blue Simmes/Heidi Lee Morgan d. Kat LeRoux/Linda Dallas; Junkyard Dog/Uncle Ivan/Rick Steiner d. Keith Steinborn/Randy Hogan/Eddie Sweat; Other winners: Fantastics, Varsity Club, Russian A's, Sting, Midnight Express. DRAW.
[A.M.]: NWA TV TITLE - Mike Rotunda d. Curtis Thompson; Fantastics d. Mike Justice/Gary Royal; Texas Sonny Boys d. Hogan/Max Miles; Other winners: Bigelow, Gilbert, Heidi Lee. BOMB.

(NWA/SYND.) - [NWA PRO]: Sonny Boys d. Cruel Connection; JYD d. Knight; Simmes d. Debbie Combs; Other winners: Commandos, Varsity Club, Gilbert, Steiner. BOMB.
[WORLD WIDE]: Midnights d. Royal/George South; LeRoux/Dallas d. Vula/Heidi Lee; Steiner d. Joe Cruze; Other winners: V.C., Sonny Boys, JYD. STRAIGHT TALK: Magnum w. Flair. BOMB-PLUS.

LINES OF THE WEEK - 1. Jesse Ventura, WWF: "McMahon, you'd sit down & have a root canal to do what Rick Rude does with these women."; 2. Ventura, WWF: "You (McMahon) are like Cosell---an announcer who never did nothing but thinks he knows everything." 3. Jim Cornette, W. WIDE: "Tony, I wish you a Merry Christmas, I wish one to Jim Ross & Bob Caudle---David...well, I don't want to carry it too far."; 4. Ross, TBS: "Her (Kat LaRoux's) father was from Cuba, Maybe she's Fidel Castro's favorite wrestler."; 5. Road Warrior Hawk, TBS: "Roller coasters have brakes. We don't."; 6. Comrade Busich, SCW: "The superkick ought to be banned...it ought to be outlawed, too."; 7. Lanny Poffo, WWF: "He (Bobby Heenan) is garnishing wages from Tully & Arn, who would be more successful alone."; 8. Cornette, TBS: I know where I saw Vula before. She was on the last Richard Simmons exercise video. She played the BEFORE side."; 9. Cornette, TBS: "Those boys (Fantastics) kinda grow on you...like fungus."; 9. Eddie Gilbert, TBS: "If you (Cornette) & me went over all the bad things we'd done, we'd be here all night.";

10. Paul E. Dangerously, W. WIDE: "It ain't who has the pencil...it's who has the eraser."; 11. Paul E., TBS: "Tonight, on Christmas Eve, Jim Cornette, don't ask Santa Claus to help you."; 12. Cornette, TBS: "He (Steinborn) looks like a gypsy that went wrong."; 13. Ross, TBS: "Paul Jones has volunteered to be the world's first artificial heart donor. He has no heart."; 14. Ventura, WWF: "He (Juan Valdez) carries those Colombian coffee beans with his mule."; 15. Hawk, TBS: "Nice & us ain't got nuttin' to do with each other!"; 16. Cornette, TBS: "Curtis Thompson looks pretty good to me, compared to your physique, David."

STRONGEST COMMENTS - 1. Ventura, WWF: "If I'd have went to fight for him (Duggan), I wouldn't have gone."; 2. Ric Flair, W. WIDE: "Lex Luger cannot blindfold himself and find his way around the ring." 3. Cornette, TBS: "Not everyone in professional wrestling likes Dusty Rhodes."

SEXIST COMMENT OF THE WEEK - Ross, TBS: "What do you expect when a bunch of women get together? They're always talking."

KRIS KRINGLE AWARD - Cornette, for asking TBS viewers to wish Merry Christmas to Randy Mulkey because "it's a living miracle Mulkeymania has lasted for another year."

BEST PICTURES - 1. WWF, Brown-Savage pullapart; 2. SCW, Tom Thumb-Samuel Kent affair; 3. NWA PRO, shot of Steiner's dog going into crowd; 4. TBS, Cornette being licked by dog; 5. TBS, Steiner bringing kid into ring to stomp Keith Steinborn.

NICKNAME OF THE WEEK - Cornette, for calling himself and David Crockett "The Odd Couple of Wrestling."

DREADED GLITCH AWARD - TBS, for tape roll during Bam Bam/Humperdink interview on A.M. show.

BLOOPER AWARDS - 1. Bob Caudle, NWA PRO, for calling Dustin Rhodes Dustin Hoffman, whereupon Ross offered, "I imagine Dustin Hoffman's home for the holidays" and Caudle responded, "Yeah, and he may be watching NWA PRO WRESTLING."; 2. Cornette/Crockett, TBS, for calling Vula "Zula."; 3. Andre the Giant, WWF, for saying "I'm unna win at 'RUMBLE ROYAL.'"; 4. WORLD CLASS, for another week of Jeff JERRET supers.

[MAIN EVENT]: Steiner d. Mike Simani; 8-MAN TAG: Original Midnight Express/Al Perez/Rip Morgan d. Fantastics/Gilbert/Italian Stallion when O.M.E. double DDTs Stallion; Sting & Luger double DQ with Road Warriors. DRAW-PLUS...the matches wer first-run but studio voiceovers still detract.

BACK ISSUES: Available for $1 each from STEVE BEVERLY, 213 PINE HILLS AVE., AUBURN AL 36830.

NEW YEAR'S NUGGETS

No BOO AWARDS since I'm still in the Christmas spirit---but, tell me, if Dusty was such an integral part of STARRCADE, why didn't he show up to help promote it Saturday? We know the answer but it registers again who he puts first....I've stated this to the TBS people but I'm not thrilled with the idea of women's matches, even though the workrate in the p.m. opener wasn't bad....The CWF show was a decent rebound effort Saturday but Charlie needs a permanent color commentator who blends either with good humor or strong technical knowledge. Pedicino was the best they ever had....Jesse Ventura had one of his top efforts Saturday with classic rejoinders for Vince.

The Christmas World Class souvenir program featured a full-page pic of Kerry with the words KERRY VON ERICH WAS ROBBED IN CHICAGO!....A couple of decent matches on the World Class show Saturday but Eric Embry & Jeff Jarrett are on the road to becoming young Dustys, considering how many situations are built around them....Is it my imagination or does Steve Williams look totally unenthusiastic about his current role?....If TBS wanted to build a quick mailing list for marketing, why not have a NAME STEINER'S DOG contest? It may be innocuous but for merchandising....

You're now seeing Jeff Carr's name top the credits on TBS shows as EXECUTIVE IN CHARGE OF PRODUCTION. I know Jeff and he's really pushing hard for positive changes....The name RUGGED RONNIE GARVIN just doesn't do much for me....Speaking of names, TBS needs to copyright all of its special act names so at least if anyone jumps to Vince, he'll have to rename them....Magnum may have set a record for the longest question on record (54 seconds) for his opening Q of Flair on STRAIGHT TALK.

Dutch Mantel, already gone from CWF, now entering ring via the theme from RAWHIDE....I hope the BUSHWACKERS don't eventually go the route of OUTBACK JACK....I know he's there as a jobber but I was disappointed Tim Horner wasn't given more than an early flurry against DiBiase. Just take it back to 1984/TBS when Tim upset Hawk....I will say the Embry angle where he suckered Skandor Akbar into signing a contract to wrestle him was beautifully done.

Thoroughly enjoyed the most recent issues of WRESTLING FORUM and RINGSIDE REFLECTOR and thanks to Jon Gallagher & J.D. McKay, Jr., for kind words....Cactus Jack Foley now being billed as Cactus Jack Manson....Thankfully, on NWA MAIN EVENT, Jim Ross referred to Cornette & Dangerously as "the two best managers in wrestling today" instead of any suck-up crap to J.J., the most overrated....Finally, wish us (Auburn) luck against Florida State. We'll be lucky to get out of the Sugar Bowl with our eye teeth. Have a wonderful New Year and we'll reconvene on Jan. 9.

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STEVE'S SIDELIGHTS
By Steve Beverly

89 WISHES FOR '89

Hopefully, you'll gaze at this diversion in your week before the ball drops at Times Square. But if a genie (preferably Barbara Eden) granted me 89 wishes this year, they'd include:

---A rejunvenated NWA, capable of capturing the hearts of a U.S. hungry for the marquee name of wrestling.

---More stations for Joe Pedicino and PWTW.

---Better creativity on pay-cable shows with more title changes.

---A CLASH OF THE CHAMPIONS as good as the first.

---More wrestling in the WWF.

---A good year for Nelson Royal's new Atlantic Coast promotion for a guy who knows the business.

---Declaring Jim Cornette a wrestling TV treasure.

---Better financial health for the independents who appear increasingly to be fading away.

---No more Big Bear Collie matches.

---Regular Saturdays and Sundays without David Crockett at a mike.

---Fewer interviews on TV wrestling shows.

---A rethinking of minds in the CWF to admit that what's going on now just isn't working.

---A mug shot of Jim Crockett on AMERICA'S MOST WANTED.

---A weekly call-in show for Broadway Danny Wolf on FNN/SCORE.

---An end to "The Dusty Flu."

---A year for Paul E. Dangerously every bit as improved as was '88.

---Lower prices for wrestling TV tapings.

---A prominent NWA role for Eddie Gilbert.

---World championships which once again mean something.

---A "roast" on TBS to honor Gordon Solie for his contributions to wrestling.

---Another money-making movie for Roddy Piper.

---Jim Ross to receive, finally, the respect he deserves from the NWA's new owners.

---More TV matches which tell a story.

---Fewer turns, so the ones that do happen have some impact.

---A place where Michael Hayes can truly put his act in its best light.

---A babyface turn for Ric Flair but only after we can digest all the confusion in the NWA.

---Less volume from Vince McMahon.

---More zingers from Jesse Ventura.

---No more "cake-in-the-face" angles.

---More impact angles like Midnights vs. Midnights.

---A chance for Ted DiBiase to rekindle some fire apparently lost after WWF SUMMER SLAM.

---An end to the Bunkhouse Stampede.

---A place for Owen Hart to be Owen Hart.

---More consistency of promotions and TV stations to alert viewers to time changes of wrestling shows.

---One Ric Flair-Ricky Steamboat match.

---No Baron Von Raschke-Soldad Ustinov match.

---A toupee for Verne Gagne.

---A picture of his favorite female wrestling star for my buddy, Charlie Platt.

---Dustin Rhodes as "The Afternoon Rider."

---A fresh concept to package pro wrestling (there are some good ideas out there).

---No more SLAMMY AWARDS.

---A haircut for Tom Prichard.

---An event for Columbus GA to honor my good friend, Fred Ward, something long overdue.

---A championship for STING.

---Improvement for Curtis Thompson, one of the kids who really impresses.

---Terry Taylor to get a decent push, something unlikely in Titanland.

---New announcers for World Class.

---Lance Russell to occasionally get a shot at the ESPN show.

---A U.A.W.F. convention in Atlanta.

---More World Class shows without the Von Erichs.

---Another appearance by Ken Osmond on an NWA CLASH.

---A year in which Ray Candy can have the same ring name longer than 3 months.

---No more Triple Towers of Doom.

---Taking the word "bruh-thuh" out of Billy Graham's vocabulary.

---John Lanigan stopping a match in Pennsylvania for "too much blood."

---A little more respect for wrestling from ESPN.

---More days off for nationally-touring pro wrestlers.

---An end to all animals and mascots at ringside.

---Ricky Morton teaming with Tenryu to form The Rock & Orient Express.

---Steve Williams to bring out his old UWF belt on an NWA show.

---A David Crockett-Rick Steiner interview in which Rick doesn't come off as the intelligent one.

---Virgil to finally take a poke at the dastardly Ted DiBiase.

---An end to Gorilla Monsoon's painfully ignorant questions about whether new wrestlers have held titles.

---An encyclopedia which tells me when Kerry Von Erich beat Hulk Hogan.

---A different shade of makeup for Brother Love.

---A big break for Tom Prichard.

---A retirement match for Virgil Runnels.

---A Barry Switzer doll for Dick Murdoch.

---A dose of Sleep-eze for Robert Fuller.

---Smiling lessons for Brickhouse Brown.

---A different job for Ed Whalen.

---A job description for Frenchy Martin.

---A return to wrestling by Bill Watts.

---A reduction in the numbers of "supercards" which ain't so super.

---Career growth for Johnny Ace & The Terminator.

---Another chorus of "Tommy Angel...how I love him," by Cornette.

---No more choruses of the Russian National Anthem.

---An appearance on NEW GENERATION HAIR CARE for Jerry Stubbs.

---A little more taste in Rick Rude's attire.

---Automatic refund policies for no-show cards.

---More respect for jobbers during commentary.

---A Road Warriors-Samoan Swat Team feud.

---A comeback for Shane Douglas.

---J.J. Dillon to have to come to all matches barefoot.

---Automatic DQs for chair-throwing in standard matches.

---A discovery that a third Dave Hebner actually exists.

---An announcement that Misty Blue Simmes is actually Uncle Ivan's niece, Natasha Koloff.

---An FDA investigation into the content of 4 Horsemen Vitamins.

---The best year ever for every MATWATCHer around the world!!!

PINFALL PROFILE: AS I SEE IT---THE AWARDS

In the upcoming MATWATCH yearbook, you'll have the full rundown on how you voted in our first awards balloting. A number of you have called and asked, "How would you have voted, Steve?" I only voted once but I'll share with you openly my choices:

BROADCAST TV MATCH OF THE YEAR: 1. MIDNIGHT EXPRESS-FANTASTICS (April, NWA WORLD WIDE). In the classic sense of a short story's rising action and falling action combining to a satisfying climax, this would have been the archetype storytelling match. The effort evoked by all four wrestlers was enormous. 2. BRUISER BRODY/EDDIE GILBERT/TOMMY RICH vs. ABDULLAH THE BUTCHER/DICK SLATER/BUCK ROBLEY (SCW, June). 3. RIC FLAIR vs. STING (NWA WORLD WIDE, February).

CABLE OR PPV MATCH: 1. FLAIR vs. STING (Clash I, TBS). I pulled out this tape again the other day to relive it and I still marvel at how its specific moments have remained in my mind. These two guys couldn't help the stupid ringside judging but their performances were immaculate to climax Jim Crockett's finest day of 1988. 2. MIDNIGHT EXPRESS vs. FANTASTICS (Clash I, TBS). 3. OWEN HART team vs. MAKHAN SINGH team (8-man, Stampede, April).

BEST NEW CHARACTERS: 1. BIG BOSSMAN, WWF. Bubba has proven he has more than a voiceless personality and his most recent interviews sound like Dick Murdoch. 2. VARSITY CLUB, NWA. If they could have left Sullivan off, I'd have voted them #1. 3. THE D.I., CWF. I just liked Bob Carter's performance here and I'm sorry he hasn't expanded it.

BEST COMEDIAN: 1. JIM CORNETTE, NWA. Think of moments as the ones before he was hoisted into that cage at the Baltimore Bash. Or the lines like: "Bush & Quayle...reminds me of a companion magazine to Field & Stream" and you know why. 2. PAUL E. DANGEROUSLY, CWF/SCW/NWA. Paul's comedy is more of a dramatic kind but his "Midnight Rider" line in August still gets me tickled. 3. RICK STEINER, NWA. The rabbit ears behind Sullivan were priceless.

BEST SUPERCARD: 1. CLASH OF THE CHAMPIONS I, NWA/WTBS. It may have been only five matches but if a textbook could be written on performance delivered vs. product promised, this is it. 2. SURVIVOR SERIES, WWF. I was genuinely entertained, which doesn't often happen to me on a WWF megacard. 3. ROYAL RUMBLE, WWF. (NOTE: My apologies for a bit of confusion because the NBC prime-time Main Event was included. The category should have been labeled NETWORK, CABLE or PPV

BEST PLAY-BY-PLAY ANNOUNCER: 1. JIM ROSS, NWA: He is to this sport now what Gordon Solie was in the '60s, '70s and early '80s. 2. LANCE RUSSELL, Memphis. The steadiest guy in the business who genuinely makes you feel he's a regular guy. 3. BOB CAUDLE, NWA: The most underrated guy in the business, he's so veteran-smooth.

BEST COLOR COMMENTATOR: 1. JIM ROSS, NWA. He has demonstrated the broadest technical knowledge of wrestling in his field. 2. JESSE VENTURA, WWF. I'd have voted for Jesse #1 except I feel he hasn't really grown this year. 3. JOE PEDICINO, CWF/SCW. His best work was done in the CWF this year.

BEST TV ANGLE: 1. EDDIE GILBERT DECKS PEZ WHATLEY JR., CWF. Again, a subjective choice but I have still not seen a crowd ready to empty from the stands as when young Whatley was popped. And I loved watching Pedicino play bouncer. 2. GILBERT-LAWLER PARKING LOT BRAWL, CWA. 3. CHERYL ROBERTS-RICK RUDE, WWF.

BEST TV BRAWL: 1. GILBERT-LAWLER PARKING LOT, CWA. When Lawler went through that windshield, this one hooked me. 2. BRODY-ABDULLAH, SCW. It was a fitting final appearance on American TV for Bruiser. 3. MIKE GOLDEN-RODDY PIPER, Portland. I enjoyed this simply because Piper showed he still had it in him.

BEST TV SHOW: 1. CWF (not for the last 2 months but for overall, giving us the country's most entertaining format for six months). 2. WWF SUPERSTARS, not so much for wrestling but for quality production values. 3. STAMPEDE (at least before Owen left).

MEMORABLE TV MOMENT: 1. TWIN HEBNER REFEREES, WWF. Has there ever been a more exaggerated scene in pro wrestling history? 2. GORDON SOLIE'S OUSTER FROM PWTW. 3. PAUL E. DANGEROUSLY's "MIDNIGHT RIDER" LINE, CWF.

BEST TV TURN: 1. BARRY WINDHAM, NWA. It may have been a hasty decision to do so but it certainly was effective. Now Barry has to capitalize on it in '89. 2. ROAD WARRIORS, NWA. They're back in the saddle again. 3. TOMMY RICH, SCW. He may yet have a significant career as a heel if he hasn't burned too many bridges.

RISING STAR OF THE YEAR: 1. RICK STEINER, NWA. It remains to be seen if he can be as effective as a babyface but I'll bet he's the NWA TV champ by the time you read this. 2. STING, NWA. I'd have made him a definite #1 if Dusty hadn't diluted him in the last six months. 3. PAUL E. DANGEROUSLY, CWF/SCW/NWA. This guy has had a year that could parlay him into the #1 slot next year if he can stay consistent.

SPECIAL ACHIEVEMENT: JERRY LAWLER, for achieving some sense of resurgence in the AWA belt (but I'd be hard put not to give EDDIE GILBERT strong consideration).

BEST OVERALL TV PERSONALITY: 1. CORNETTE. 2. DANGEROUSLY. 3. ROSS.

OPINION QUESTION: For booker of the NWA if a single one were chosen: BILL WATTS.

Now for the worst.....

WORST BROADCAST MATCH: 1. KEVIN SULLIVAN VS. BIG BEAR COLLIE. After being subjected to this one four times on NWA MAIN EVENT, this wins it with me for sheer irritation. 2. MR. BIG HANDICAP MATCH, WATL WRESTLETHON. 3. BARON VON RASCHKE VS. SOLDAD USTINOV, AWA/Syndicated (it also aired on ESPN).

WORST CABLE/PPV MATCH: 1. ANABOLIC WARRIOR VS. HERCULES HERNANDEZ, Wrestlemania IV. These guys better be glad Paul Jones vs. Ivan Koloff came after Dec. 1. 2. ANABOLIC WARRIOR VS. HONKY TONK MAN, Summer Slam. 3. BAD NEWS BROWN vs. KEN PATERA, Summer Slam.

WORST NEW CHARACTERS: 1. THE MIDNIGHT RIDER, NWA. I don't care if this was an encore of Florida 1983...he was new nationally and certainly not improved. 2. DIAMOND DALLAS PAGE, AWA. This guy just rubs me the wrong way as a poor man's Michael Hayes. 3. HIGH CHIEF AFI, WWF. Do you even remember him?

WORST SUPERCARD: 1. WRESTLEMANIA IV, for product delivered vs. promises offered.

WORST PLAY-BY-PLAY ANNOUNCER: 1. DAVID CROCKETT, NWA. The Pee Wee Herman of TV wrestling with none of the humor. 2. ED WHALEN, Stampede. If you don't want to be there, Ed, do us all a favor. 3. NICK PATRICK, Deep South. I wish someone could enroll Nick in a course of the King's English.

WORST COLOR COMMENTATOR: 1. STEVE WILLIAMS, Clash II. This was absolutely painful to watch Doc in a hopelessly miscast role. 2. BILLY GRAHAM, Summer Slam. I wish he'd never heard the word, "bruh-thuh." 3. DAVID CROCKETT, NWA. You know the NWA has a jobber called The Menace? I think it's really David.

WORST TV ANGLE: 1. AKEEM IS BORN, WWF. I'm not even a minority and I was mortally offended at another racial putdown. 2. FRITZ VON ERICH's HEART ATTACK, World Class. 3. BUCK ROBLEY's ATTACK ON MR. WRESTLING II, WATL Wrestlethon.

WORST TURN: 1. STEVE WILLIAMS, NWA. There is still no logical explanation why Doc is in the Varsity

Club. I didn't know trips to Japan warp one's thinking. 2. RONNIE GARVIN, NWA. There's almost equally no explanation why a former world champion would suddenly turn bounty hunter. 3. EDDIE GILBERT, NWA. Please make him a heel in '89.

DECLINING TV STAR(S): 1. BRAD ARMSTRONG/TIM HORNER, NWA. Dusty basically killed their careers. 2. JIMMY VALIANT, NWA/AWA/Memphis. 3. ROCK & ROLL EXPRESS, NWA/AWA/CWA/SCW.

WORST TV MUSIC: 1. CATCH THE PINFALLS, NWA. The 60-second version drones on and on like the "I know...I know" portion of "Ain't No Sunshine When She's Gone." 2. SCW THEME. If I hear that "mustard on my blue jeans" song one more time.... 3. KING HAKU THEME, WWF. Maybe it's because I just don't picture Haku as a king but what about Don Ho singing "Tiny Bubbles" instead?

WORST SHOW: 1. DEEP SOUTH. How Jody Hamilton could pass this off as a TV product is amazing. 2. WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING, TBS. This is honestly not the worst show on the air but overall, it has been the biggest waste of the most valuable time slot on cable TV. 3. AWA CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING. Until the recent Tennessee shows, I thought if they showed one more Soldad Ustinov/Tiejho Khan match....

WORST IDEA: 1. FOUR HORSEMEN VITAMINS. Admit it. You almost bought some, didn't you? 2. MIDNIGHT RIDER, NWA. The catalyst which began to add rust to the already-tarnished legend. 3. WRESTLEMANIA IV at TRUMP PLAZA. Never put pro wrestling in with the hoi polloi.

WORST OVERALL TV PERSONALITY: 1. DAVID CROCKETT, NWA. You'd get the idea I don't particularly care for this guy, wouldn't you? Don't know why. 2. ROBERT GIBSON, NWA/AWA/CWA. I'd like to see him teamed up with Tommy Rich, Junkyard Dog, John Ayres and Nick Patrick on an intellectual talk show. 3. FRENCHY MARTIN, WWF. Can anyone tell me what this guy does?

Okay, gang...there's the ol' MATWATCHer's picks. We'll see how well (or poorly) I did in the yearbook. Don't be too hard on me. It's still the holiday season.

THE DREE-UM HAS BEEN ASKED...WHEEZE... TO EXPLAN EXACTLY WHUT "GRITT" IS... GASP...
"GRITT" IS JES' LIKE "GRIT", 'CEPT YOU DON'T GET SUED...
WHEEZE...
"THE DREAM EXPLAINS STARRCADE #1" COLLECT 'EM ALL!

MATWATCH SUBSCRIPTIONS

A most HAPPY NEW YEAR and many, many thanks for making the first 27 issues of MATWATCH widely read throughout the U.S., Canada, Australia, and New Zealand.

Even though the holidays are about to pass, there's bound to be a birthday, a graduation, a special occasion which could make MATWATCH a perfect gift! Or, perhaps you've been subscribing 8 issues at a time and would like to exercise our money-saving year-long order. To be honest, printing costs are uncertain throughout 1989. We're going to attempt to keep MATWATCH affordable for all wrestling fans. But if we face a price increase later in '89, you won't be affected with a year-long order.

Our prices: for the U.S. & Canada, $5 for every 8-issue order or $26 for one year.

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I REMEMBER....

(EDITOR'S NOTE: One of my favorite MATWATCH features is to dip back into the memory banks of classic TV wrestling and live again the angles and showdowns which have kept us hooked to our sets. For this double issue, we look back at two fond moments from the 1960s era of Georgia and Florida wrestling.)

THE PROFESSIONAL VS. THE BLUE DESTROYER

The mere glance of that second name brings to mind the countless, faceless jobbers of today's national ring era. However, this Blue Destroyer, while not Original, Sensational, Intelligent in billing, lost more than a name in this match.

The year was 1969 and Doug Gilbert had entered Georgia a year earlier as a heel who never wrestled in tag matches and never gave returns to men he had defeated. Though not tall, Gilbert had demonstrated an uncanny knack for counterwrestling and sent Dick Steinborn packing from the area in an early series. But after converting to a face, The Professional appeared headed for an ultimate world title shot.

The previous week, Ed Capral had billed The Blue Destroyer as "having asked for a match with The Pro" but claimed to know little about him. Scheduled in the finale of BIG TIME WRESTLING from Atlanta, The Destroyer appeared to be a well-proportioned man and gave no interview before the match.

In the first four minutes, The Destroyer gave us a clue as to his identity with a trademark push---not a whip---into the ropes of The Pro and a short, thundering double chop on Gilbert. Only in this case, Gilbert didn't sell it a bit. The Destroyer tried a suplex and never gained more than a one count. The visiting heel went for a crushing backbreaker and Gilbert wouldn't budge.

As The Destroyer went for a shoulder block on The Pro into the turnbuckle, Gilbert dodged. As The Destroyer (whose identity I had by now uncovered) crashed his own shoulder, he was met with a vicious dropkick from The Pro.

Gilbert then followed up with three crashing body slams. The Destroyer seemed obviously uncomfortable with the mask throughout the match. On the third slam, he needn't have worried. The mask flew off and color announcer Leo Garibaldi screamed, "IT'S GENE KINISKI!" The NWA titleholder fled the ring for the dressing room to a countout and a resounding pop from the WQXI-TV crowd. The Pro raised the hood of his fallen opponent and was proclaimed the undisputed (haven't we heard that word unceasingly in recent days) #1 contender for the NWA title.

Ironically, the matchup was never held. Two weeks later, a returning El Mongol upset The Professional in a dramatic TV match and was granted a shot at Kinisski instead, eventually setting up a major Gilbert-Mongol feud. Kinisski refused to put up the belt and, typically, El Mongol pinned Kinisski in the non-title bout clean in the center at the old Atlanta City Auditorium.

Yet, El Mongol never gained a title shot. One month later, Kinisski dropped the belt to Dory Funk Jr. in Tampa. Somehow, it seemed fitting. For the MATWATCH Memory is imbedded with the

freeze-frame of that moment when I saw, for the first time, a world champion embarrassed on television.

THE SPUTNIK MONROE TURN

In a sense, Sputnik Monroe has been a recurring character in MATWATCH, almost as Martha Raye was in ALICE----at some point, he keeps returning.

Sputnik was one of my favorite heels as a child. He could take a crowd with that blond streak and profile point and incense a crowd quicker than Kevin Sullivan could ever imagine doing.

But I'll never forget the day in the late summer of 1967 when Monroe saw the "error of his ways." In a sense, it wasn't the best-orchestrated turn but---in a day when image-switching was so rare that it meant something---it gained our attention.

Monroe had been involved in a tag situation with Karl Von Brauner for a few months after losing the NWA world tag belts he co-held with his "brother," Rocket. The Monroe-Von Brauner duo was likewise managed by Gentleman Saul Weingeroff, but it seemed to be going nowhere.

On a Saturday edition of CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING FROM FLORIDA, Sam Steamboat and the hapless Bronco Kelly were taking on Kurt & Skull Von Stroheim. Kelly, whose ring talent was on a par with Randy Hogan, had been blistered to the point of obliteration and was ailing outside the ring. With the excellent Steamboat left in a one-on-two situation, Sam was no match for the much larger Stroheims.

Out of nowhere, Sputnik appeared at Gordon Solie's ringside table. Said Sputnik: "Gordon, you know what my philosophy has been for a long time. I can't change a lot of that now. But, as you know, my brother was injured in much the same way and I can't just sit back and watch this happen, so I've got to go in and help the guy." Much to the surprise of the Sportatorium throng, Sputnik immediately clobbered Kurt, grabbed Skull in a headlock and proceeded to assist Steamboat in a series of crushing headrams with the two "Germans."

Upon returning to Solie's desk, he was met by an angry Weingeroff, who suggested "how dare you do this to one of your partner's countrymen!" After telling Gentleman Saul to shut up, Sputnik was grabbed by Von Brauner and promptly slapped several times by Weingeroff.

So in the day's final event, scheduled as Von Brauner-Monroe vs. Jose Lothario-Red Bastein, Sputnik jumped to the side of Jose & Red and The Von Stroheims returned to aid Von Brauner. The ensuing brawl led to a staccato chant of "SPUTNIK! SPUTNIK! SPUTNIK!"

Sputnik left the ring with dramatic handshakes from Lothario & Bastein and Solie told us, "Well, as I live and breathe, I never thought I'd see this day." Quite a change from the day during Sputnik's fourth week in Florida when Gordon admonished him, "Well, with all the talk you're doing from this desk, I'm not sure you're not just a little afraid of some of these men!" Sputnik was never the same in intensity as a face but he did show us there was a different side to "The Blond Streak."

COMINGS & GOINGS

---Michael Hayes headed into the NWA in mid-January for what we're told is a significant push (wonder if Jimmy Garvin wears bad deodorant?) and Turner is also about to sign another rising young star.

---The two-hour KTVT Saturday night World Class show is about to be edited down to one hour for syndication under the title U.S. CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING. It will fulfill the committment to stations still running Wild West reruns.

---Two promotions may be about to bid on the services of a popular U.S. star who spends a lot of time in Japan.

---Tom Prichard does indeed turn in the CWF title match vs. Brad Armstrong this weekend but that match may not air in many CWF markets. Some dispute internally over whether the Doctor should have switched sides.

---WWF in Chattanooga Monday night with Savage-Brown, DiBiase-Hercules, Koko-Hennig, Rougeaus-Harts & Race-Haku.

---CWA champ Sid Vicious took on Kerry Von Erich in Dallas Dec. 18 and many fans were asking what the CWA was.

---NWA billing Flair-Sting, Dusty-Luger-Steiner vs. Road Warriors-Ellering & Windham vs. Ray Candy (?) for Pacific Northwest tour.

---While those guys are in the West, Midnights-Original Midnights will headline a 4-night stop in the Carolinas.

---THE REST OF THE STORY: Sources close to the CWF say Ken Wayne had no showed several towns and that's why he's not with the promotion.

---IT'S IN THE WATER: Born two weeks ago: Cody Paul Taylor, to the Terry Taylors; and Christopher Sloan Adams, to the Chris Adamses. Cody was 9 lbs., 6 oz., and Chris was 8/2. Either a good feud or two new family tag teams in the works.

---Adams has worked a deal with Jerry Jarrett to promote his own shows in the Dallas area. For some odd reason, Adams has even been plugging requests to be "your local promoter" on the KTVT World Class show. Can't believe that arrangement will last.

---To show you the kind of guy Jim Ross is, he was on the road virtually every day two weeks before Christmas but still found time to referee one of the Oklahoma state high school football championship games Dec. 18.

---Turner Program Services has taken over full syndication of NWA PRO & WORLD WIDE from The Wrestling Network.

---Jerry Blackwell will stay in business, emphasizing the local guys as his mainstays. Joe Pedicino will stay on as play-by-play announcer with the next SCW tapings Jan. 8.

---Ted Allen & Billy Powell will form an SCW combination called GEORGIA POWER.

---I'll say this: the Andrews Syndication people (they distribute World Class) are responsive! After reading in MATWATCH about their entire Dec. 17 show on WXTX in Columbus airing without announcers' audio, they called immediately to troubleshoot it and, as well, crack down on misspelled names, as in the same show's Jeff JERRET.

---RATINGS RAP: For the week ending Nov. 27, the WWF posted a 9.9 on 257 stations and a 9.7 for the week ending Dec. 4. The reason NWA and ALL-PRO syndication figures aren't available: TPS, which distributes NWA, does not subscribe to the same rating service as the WWF; and the AWA is now having its numbers broken out separately from the ALL-PRO roster.

---The repeat showing Dec. 20 of CLASH IV only drew an 0.8 rating and 3.4 share but the 12:20 start time in the East Coast meant it didn't end until nearly 3 a.m. Plus, the show was hardly promoted and the negative reviews of the first run didn't help either. Still, just short of a million viewers watched the replay.

---As of Christmas week, a definite card for CLASH V was still not final for Feb. 15 and TBS programmers are getting antsy because promotion has to be readied. Same for the Chicago PPV in February.

---Memphis did a 3.5% buy-rate for SUPER CLASH III but Dallas, one of the key markets, is where a transmission problem blacked out the first hour of the show, so the cable companies are not charging subscribers for the event, which probably costs FNN/SCORE its most serious money. Most cable operators are saying about 40-45,000 homes picked up the event, but no estimate on how the Dallas refunds will affect the gross.

---To those who have asked: yes, I thought Dusty's hog-the-show display during the PWI Awards presentation on TBS was disgraceful. He tried to put down Sting and steal the entire spotlight when he didn't win a single award. But the reason we didn't include his obnoxious "I AM TBS! I AM WRESTLING..." diatribe in STRONGEST COMMENTS is he'd said the same thing three months ago and we inserted it then. But that doesn't excuse how pitiful this refusal to accept reality has become.

---To those of you who have sent the many lovely Christmas cards, they are all lining our dining room hallway. We can't thank you enough for your kindnesses.

JOE PEDICINO: "WE'RE PROUD OF WHAT WE DID"

ATLANTA - Acknowledging poor reviews of the recent Bruiser Brody retrospective on FNN/SCORE, the program's co-host, Joe Pedicino, says lack of money was a big reason for the show's technical limitations. But, says Pedicino, "We're proud of what we did."

The show, which aired Nov. 12 on SCORE, to promote sales of a Brody memorial videotape, featuring highlights of Frank Goodish's legendary career, had some abrupt cuts and finishes of at least two matches were not shown.

But in his office at WVEU in Atlanta, Pedicino told MATWATCH, "The main reason some of those endings weren't shown is that in at least two of them, a bunch of guys came in and beat up Brody. We just didn't feel like that was appropriate for a show that was meant to be a tribute to Brody."

Pedicino also says co-host John Henderson financed some of the production out of his own pocket and "we were working on a budget [illegible] to produce the show." Pedicino adds, "We were trying to keep our costs as low as possible [illegible] hey from the videotape sales could go to Barbara Goodish (Brody's widow), rather than an expensive production that would put everybody in the hole."

In the long run, Pedicino says, "I want people to understand that the videotape will have much more than what was on the show. And I can assure you, every penny of the profits will go to start a college fund for Frank's son. For that reason alone, I'm very proud of my association with it."

MATWATCH
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CABLE RATINGS RAP

	Rating	Share
WCW 12/17 (TBS, 6 pm)	2.9	5.5
PTW 12/19 (USA, 9 pm)	2.7	4.4
NME 12/18 (TBS, 6 pm)	2.3	4.2
NWA CW 12/17 (TBS, 11 am)	1.5	4.7
CLASH IV 12/20 (Replay)	0.8	3.4

(ANALYSIS: Ironically, with one of the poorer NWA efforts in history, the audience stayed with the show virtually the entire way with little fluctuation. Perhaps the heavy plugging of Barry-Eddie on the 17th will help the Christmas Eve rating. The Chicago-Minnesota game may well have hurt PTW in key North and Midwest markets. Everything else was virtually flat.)

MATWATCH REMINDER

PLEASE NOTE: This double issue counts for both this week and the week of Jan. 2-8. The next publication will be the week of Jan. 9-15. Please check below your address label to see if your subscription expires with this issue. And have a most enjoyable NEW YEAR!!!

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SUBSCRIPTION ENDS JAN. 16 ISSUE